

COA #2014-COA-334 (LS)	<b>INDIANAPOLIS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION</b>  <b>STAFF REPORT</b>	Hearing Date <b>SEPT. 3, 2014</b>
<b>619 E. New York Street LOCKERBIE SQUARE</b>		New Case       Center Twp. Council District 15 Vop Osili
<b>Applicant</b> <b>COREY FRASIER</b> mailing address: 911 Main Street Indianapolis, IN 46220		
<b>Owner:</b> INPA, Housing Partners, LLC 911 Main Street Indianapolis, IN 46220		
<b>CASE</b>		
<b>IHPC COA: 2014-COA-334 (LS)</b> Paint the unpainted brick on a historic house.		
<b>STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial</b>		
<b>STAFF COMMENTS</b>		

#### **Request for 1-Day Waiver of Notice**

The applicant was not able to get notices sent out on time and is asking for a 1-day waiver of notice. Staff feels that the request is reasonable as surrounding property owners had notice 22 days prior to the hearing, which staff believes is ample time to review the request.

#### **Background of the Property**

The site contains a brick Italianate house built c. 1875 as a single-family house. It has been divided up into as many as five units in its history. Most recently it had four units. It sat vacant and deteriorating in recent years awaiting the settling of the estate of its long-time owner. The new owner is converting it back to a single-family house. The house contains an elaborate Queen Anne wood porch on the side that is thought to have been added around 1887.

#### **Background of the Request**

The brick displays several serious problems:

1. A significant amount of tuck pointing is required
2. Some brick replacement is needed due to spalling.
3. Some mortar needs to be removed where it was applied incorrectly in the past.

Earlier this year, the owner sought a COA, and one was granted by staff to perform appropriate tuck pointing and brick replacement. However, the applicant subsequently decided to seek approval to paint over the brick after repairs are completed. He believes that without paint, he will need to tuck point almost the entire house in order to undo the inappropriate tuck pointing done by previous owners. He believes this will be a cost savings of \$25,000.

Although some areas of the brick have already been painted (porch, cornice, and a wall sign on the east elevation) staff sees most of the brick as being unpainted and recognizes that paint applied to historic masonry is not a recommended practice since it can cause damage to soft historic masonry and mortar.

## **National Park Service Guidelines For Rehabilitating Historic Buildings: Masonry**

Not Recommended: "Applying paint or other coatings such as stucco to masonry that has been historically unpainted or uncoated to create a new appearance."

### **Lockerbie Square Historic Area Plan**

The Plan does not expressly recommend against painting historic masonry. However, it does recommend against waterproof and water repellent coatings since they are generally not needed and can cause damage to the masonry.

From Lockerbie Square Plan:

#### **MASONRY continued**

5. Avoid power grinders. Mechanical equipment is cumbersome and even the most skilled worker will tire or slip and cause irreversible damage.
6. Avoid sandblasting, high pressure water blasting (over 600 psi), grinding, and harsh chemicals.
7. Waterproof and water repellent coatings should be avoided. They are generally not needed and can potentially cause serious damage to the masonry. Also avoid covering masonry with tar or cement coatings.

### **Reasons for Denial**

1. The National Park Service recommends against painting historic brick.
2. Paint applied to soft historic brick can trap water behind the painted surface causing spalling
3. The conditions of the brick should not have been a surprise to the owner, as it was readily observable at the time he purchased the property and decided to undertake the rehabilitation.
4. Given the history of this house, the expectation should not be perfect, even brickwork. It is reasonable to expect that this house will show its age, even after rehabilitation.
5. No assessment, bid, or analysis by a recognized historic brick expert has been submitted.

### **Recommended Next Steps**

The brick conditions on this house are bad, and varied. But given the age of this structure and its architectural significance and the soft nature of the brick, paint should not be applied to the entire surface. As an alternative, appropriate tuckpointing, gentle removal of any mortar on the surface of the brick, and selective brick replacement should be performed. The area of the house where there was once a painted (ghost) wall sign should be carefully assessed and cleaned if necessary, as much of the paint is now worn off. Painting certain limited areas that were painted in the past and still retain most of their paint might be considered, but the applicant needs to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness to paint already painted surfaces again (if a different color) and will need approval to remove paint or clean existing surfaces.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDED MOTION**

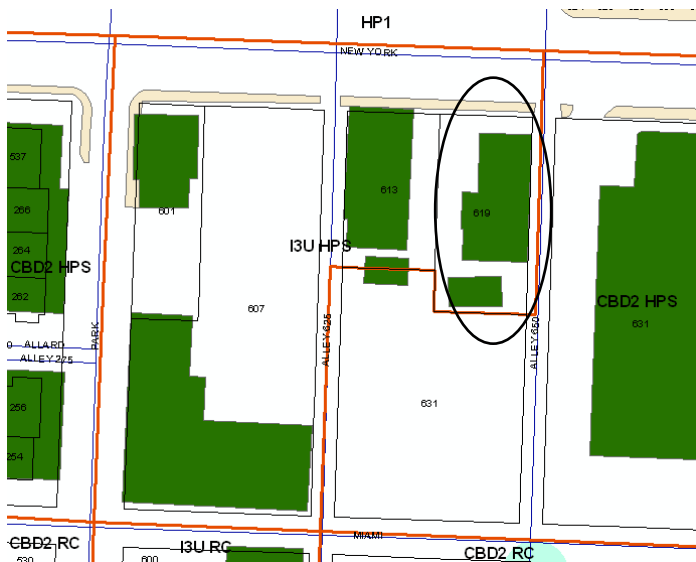
**2014-COA-334(LS):**

**Denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness or Authorization to paint the unpainted masonry on the house.**

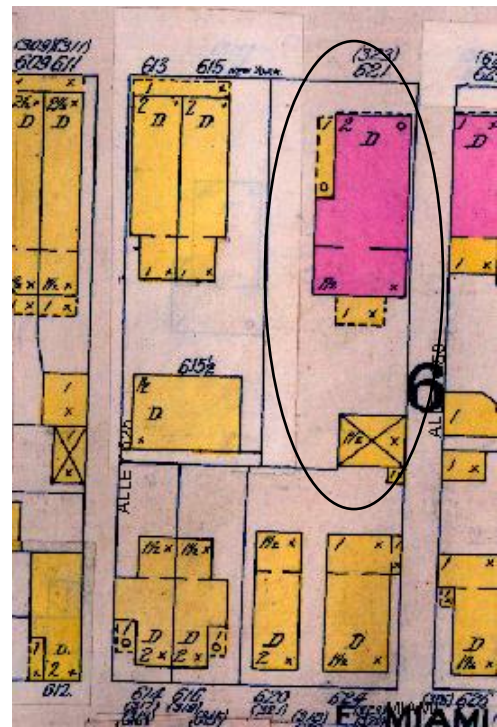
**OR**

**Continuance to a future date, after an analysis by a brick expert(s) has been done and alternative approaches explored that eliminate or reduce the need to apply paint.**

**Staff Reviewer:** Meg Purnsley



**Location of the property**



**1898 Sanborn Map**



**Above: Front elevation and east elevation next to alley**





**Front Porch**





**Existing brick conditions**







**Existing brick conditions**







**Rear house (above)**



**West Elevation from rear of house**





**East Elevation (from rear)**



**East Elevation (from front)  
Note location of "ghost sign"**